

NAME:

BLOCK:

**- CENTRAL HISTORICAL QUESTION(S) -**  
**HOW ARE MASS MOVEMENTS CREATED?**

**FEATURED BELOW:** *A mass gathering at the Washington Monument in Washington, D.C. in the United States of America*



**LESSON OBJECTIVE(S)**

**1.) DEFINE** “mass movement”

**2.) EVALUATE** the extent to which Eric Hoffer’s theory on mass movements is sufficient

**PART I: WARM UP**

**DIRECTIONS:** Respond to the Warm Up question. Make note of any meaningful comments in the following mini-discussion.

---

---

---

**PART II: ERIC HOFFER HANDOUT**

**DIRECTIONS:** With your partner, interpret and summarize your assigned quotation by reading it and then summarizing the main argument from the quotation. Additionally, explain what Eric Hoffer might have to say about ‘Mass Movements.’ Be prepared to share your analysis with the class.

<p><b>Hoffer Excerpt:</b></p>	<p><b>What is Hoffer saying here? What does it reveal about mass movements?</b></p>
<p><b>PASSAGE #1.</b> “All movements, however different in doctrine and aspiration, draw their early adherents from the same types of humanity; they all appeal to the same types of mind. Though there are obvious differences between the fanatical Christian, the fanatical Mohammendan, the fanatical nationalist, the fanatical Communist and the fanatical Nazi, ...[they] may be viewed and treated as one.” (xi-xii)</p>	
<p><b>PASSAGE #2.</b> “Those who would transform a nation or the world cannot do so by breeding and captaining discontent or by demonstrating the reasonableness and desirability of the intended changes or by coercing people into a new way of life. They must know how to kindle and fan an extravagant hope. It matters not whether it be hope of a heavenly kingdom, of heaven on earth, of plunder and untold riches, or fabulous achievement or world dominion” (9).</p>	
<p><b>PASSAGE #3.</b> “As for the hopeful: it does not seem to make any difference who it is that is seized with a wild hope—whether it be an enthusiastic individual, a land hungry farmer, a get-rich-quick speculator, a sober merchant or industrialist, a plain workingman or a noble lord—they all proceed recklessly with the present, wreck it if necessary, and create a new world” (10).</p>	
<p><b>PASSAGE #4.</b> “[Leaders] must also have an extravagant conception of the prospects and potentialities of the future. Finally, they must be wholly ignorant of the difficulties involved in their vast undertaking. Experience is a handicap. The men who started the French Revolution were wholly without political experience. The same is true of the Bolsheviks, Nazis, and revolutionaries in Asia” (11).</p>	

<p><b>PASSAGE #5.</b>          “[People’s] innermost craving is for new life—a rebirth—or, failing this, a chance to acquire new elements of pride, confidence, hope, a sense of purpose and worth by an identification with a holy cause. An active mass movement offers them opportunities for both” (12-13).</p>	
<p><b>PASSAGE #6.</b>          “Mass movements are usually accused of doping their followers with hope of the future while cheating them of the enjoyment of the present. Yet to the frustrated the present is irremediably spoiled. Comforts and pleasures cannot make it who. No real content or comfort can ever arise in their minds but from hope” (15).</p>	
<p><b>PASSAGE #7.</b>          “A rising mass movement preaches the immediate hope. It is intent on stirring its followers to action, and it is the around-the-corner brand of hope that prompts people to act.... the Jacobins promised immediate liberty, equality, [and fraternity], the early Bolsheviki promised bread and land; Hitler promised an immediate end to Versailles’ bondage and work and action for all” (30).</p>	
<p><b>PASSAGE #8.</b>          “The passion for equality is partly a passion for anonymity: to be one thread of many which make up a tunic; one thread not distinguishable from the others....their innermost desire is for an end to the ‘free for all.’ They want to eliminate competition and the ruthless testing to which the individual is continually subjected in a free society” (33).</p>	

Based on each group’s summary and explanation of what Eric Hoffer has to say about the nature of mass movement, what do you think might a proper way of summing up Eric Hoffer’s take on mass movements?

**PART III: RUSSIAN “DESPERATION” & HOPE**

**DIRECTIONS:** Read each document and decide whether Russia is “desperate” enough to be susceptible to Eric Hoffer’s equation of “Desperation + Hope = Mass Movement.”

**DOCUMENT A: JOURNALIST ACCOUNT OF RURAL RUSSIA**

*While strolling about the country place where I spent the summer of 1878 I could see an old peasant walking toward me. He was carrying a little girl, about one-and-a-half years old. Another child, about twelve years old, was walking beside him. They resembled beggars in their outward appearance. Even for country folk they were poorly dressed. The man’s trousers were ragged and torn, exposing his bare body beneath, and he was barefoot. The little girl was so thin and jaundiced that she seemed ill. Her blond hair was disheveled and hung in dirty strands with little cakes of dirt visible between them. The other girl’s appearance also suggested poverty and untidiness. I said to him:*

*“The little girls are so thin,…”*

*“That they are, my friend, and how else when there’s no food for them?”*

*“How is it they have no food?”*

*“There isn’t any, that’s all. We had a cow., but the Lord took her from us—she died—So, no milk.”*

*“Then what do you feed this little one?” I asked.*

*“What do we feed her? Same things we eat—kvas [a drink made from fermented bread] and bread.”*

*“To such a little child?!”*

*“And just what would you do? God willing, we’ll buy a cow before winter. But in the meantime, we have to endure—can’t be helped!”*

**SOURCE:** By 1897 there were some 100 million peasants (84% of the total population) in Russia, and they occupied the lowest rungs on the social ladder. Gleb Uspenskii, a journalist living in rural Russia, wrote about the living and working conditions of peasants in an essay entitled “From a Village Diary.”

**DOCUMENT B: FACTORY CONDITIONS**

*Sanitary conditions in the workers' settlement are highly conducive to the contraction and spread of disease. The marketplace and streets are full of filth. The air is rotten with the stench from factory smoke, coal, and lime dust, and filth and waste fills the gutters, streets, and squares. The interiors of most workers' living quarters are just as unhygienic.*

*In factory No. 135 the workers are still treated as serfs. Wages are paid out only twice a year, even then not in full but only enough to pay the workers' taxes. Thus the workers are without money the whole year. Besides, they are also paying severe fines to the factory, and these sums will be subtracted from their wages.*

**SOURCE:** In the 1880s the ministry of finance established a committee to investigate factory conditions and report violations of labor legislation. In the late 1880s several Russian inspectors reported their findings on the working and living conditions of workers employed in a variety of enterprises.

## DOCUMENT C: PETITION TO TSAR NICHOLAS II

Sovereign!

We, workers and inhabitants of the city of St. Petersburg, our wives, children, and helpless parents, have come to you, Sovereign, to seek justice and protection.

Sovereign, outwardly we are human beings, but in reality we are not provided with even the right to speak, to think, to assemble, to discuss our needs, or to take measures to improve our conditions. Our employers have enslaved us and they did so under the protection of your officials, with their aid and cooperation. They imprison and send into exile any one of us who has the courage to speak on behalf of the interests of the working class and of the people. To pity a downtrodden and tormented person with no rights is to commit a grave crime. The entire working people and the peasants are subjected to the arbitrariness of a bureaucratic administration composed of embezzlers of public funds and thieves who not only have no concern at all for the interests of the Russian people but who harm those interests. The bureaucratic administration has reduced the country to complete destitution, drawn it into a shameful war, and brings Russia ever further towards ruin. The people are deprived of any possibility of expressing its wishes and demands, or of participating in the establishment of taxes and in their expenditure. Workers are deprived of the possibility of organizing into unions to defend their interests.

**SOURCE:** Father Gapon, a priest who led the workers' demonstration on January 9, 1905 (known as "Bloody Sunday"), helped write the workers' petition that was sent to Nicholas II.

**DOCUMENT D: RUSSIA & WORLD WAR I**

*When Russian armies retreated, the Russian military commanders applied a “scorched-earth policy” of destroying anything that might be of use to the advancing German military, including shelter and food supplies. Millions of Russian refugees streamed eastward where they interfered with the movements of the Russian military. In addition the refugees required shelter and food which were in short supply. The influx of hungry and discontented refugees brought more problems to Russia’s cities.*

*Russia financed its war effort by increasing taxes, securing foreign loans, and increasing the supply of paper money six times over. Government debt and inflation skyrocketed. Between 1914 and 1916, prices tripled, but wages only doubled. The pressures on the urban population rose even higher as some six million war refugees and new hires crowded the cities. Capitalists raked in record profits while workers strained to pay daily expenses.*

*World War I both created and exacerbated severe economic difficulties. By late 1916, with the mobilization of some fifteen million men and the direction of all resources to the war effort, the population endured shortages of boots, firewood, kerosene, soap, sugar, and textiles. While good harvests produced plenty of food in rural areas, the railroads could not get food to the cities fast enough to satisfy demand. By the winter of 1916-17, the cities confronted a critical food shortage.*

**SOURCE:** *The Russian Revolution*, by Professors Daniel Field, Stephen P. Frank, Abbot Gleason, Patricia Herlihy, and Ronald Grigor Suny. Published by the Brown University Watson Institute for International Studies, 2005.

According to these documents, do you think Russia’s **desperation** is deep enough to have the majority of its population follow the radical ideology championed by a few individuals?

PART IV: COMMUNISM & RUSSIA

Directions: As you watch the video, review the concept of communism. Then, respond to the question below.



1.) Why do you think *Russia* would find the concept of Communism appealing? Consider the provided documents, as well as the information provided by Professor Herlihey.